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As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

* All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

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drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land.

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*.

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziābhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man."

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied:

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Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his heretditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

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ment on the subject, by following some of the suggestions advanced by Robert Redfield for the comparison of world views.[15]

"What does a people confront as it looks out on the world?" Redfield asks. After proposing a triangle of general objects confronted by all peoples—man, nature, and God—he goes on to suggest two specific questions: (1) Are these objects viewed as parts of a common matrix, each infusing the other, or are they viewed as separate and distinct entities? (2) Are they viewed as equally significant, or is special attention paid to one at the expense of the others?

As a point of departure for discussing the world view of the Amhara peasant as a whole, we may consider Redfield's characterization of the "primitive world view." In his account of a generalized primitive world view, Redfield posits that man, nature, and God are perceived as parts of an indissoluble unity, lacking really distinct identities. In the primitive outlook nature is personalized; the supernatural infuses the natural; and man's actions and traits resemble those of the deities. If this is so, then one may say that the Amhara peasant has passed beyond this primitive conception in the direction of differentiating man, nature, and God; but he has not proceeded very far. His God is conceived as a transcendental, self-sufficient Being, abstracted from particular earthly manifestations, and dwelling only at the crown of heaven. He sees nature as having a character and imposing demands of its own, not as a bearer of divine and human properties. He sees man as lacking the powers and virtues of divine beings and at the same time different in kind and higher in status than anything which exists in nature. Yet while these three objects are endowed with distinct identities and autonomous natures, they are conceived as closely and continuously interdependent. Much of what takes place in nature, such as a flood or a bad harvest, is attributed to divine agency, and the character of certain natural objects, like groves of trees and pools of water, is colored by associations with the supernatural. In human affairs, supernatural beings of various sorts are constantly active, and in the case of the *tābot*, the holy ark, a divine object has been thoroughly personalized. Man's life, moreover, is seen as intimately bound up with the vicissitudes of nature, and a personal relationship subsists between man and his friends and enemies in the animal world. In short, the Amhara looks on man, nature, and God as *separate but closely interconnected entities.*

[181] While each of these three entities is an object of great significance to the Amhara peasant, moreover, it may be said that man is regarded as the most significant of the three; and in particular, the problem of *human aggression* may be identified as the dominant theme in the Amhara peasant's outlook on life.

Nature, to the Amhara peasant, presents no outstanding challenge, no perplexing problem, no compelling attraction. Nature is to be adjusted to carefully and quietly. God and other supernatural beings become crucial objects

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life.

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones.

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels.

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shīllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor.

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience.

*753 827 828 exercise the heart severely and, if prolonged, portend serious consequences. Deep sorrow, fear, and anger---particularly in response to personal insult---stoke the cardiac fires, whose heat radiates to the lungs where it produces coughing and difficulty in breathing, to the stomach whose aroused wosfat cause pain and vomiting, and to the blood whose smoldering darkens the complexion. Under these circumstances, the heart cannot function effectively for long; clear thinking becomes difficult and, as the heart dissipates its energies, the body trembles. If these effects continue unabated, cardiac deterioration leads to madness and, eventually, death.

*753 • 82 *[192] Two illnesses are explainable only epidemiologically: The hot, Sudanic borderlands are associated with malaria, and the damp, cold Semyen heights are linked to a "wind disease" (yinifas basiyta), characterized by shortness of breath, chest pains, excessive saliva, fatigue, and joint pain.

*753 Lastly, the appearance of certain ailments is related to prodromal complaints: Epilepsy preceeds madness; poxes before blindness; catarrh leads to diptheria; syphilis results in blindness, rheumatism, miscarriage, chronic back pain, weak heart (chronic fatigue), and scrofula; measles brings deafness. Although it is frequently assumed that the prodromal essence (basiyta)